

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 07927 191503Z

62

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SUBJ: MEXICAN PUBLIC OPINION FOCUSES ON CIA-CHILE-MEXICO

1. MEXICAN PUBLIC OPINION IS SHARPLY FOCUSED UPON THE ACTIVITIES -- REAL OR ALLEGED -- OF THE CIA IN LATIN AMERICA IN GENERAL AND IN CHILE AND MEXICO IN PARTICULAR. PRESIDENT FORD'S COMMENT ON CHILE IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE OF SEPTEMBER 16 AND STATEMENTS BY U.S. OFFICIALS AND CONGRESSMEN ON THE QUESTION OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN CHILEAN POLITICAL AFFAIRS ARE RECEIVING FULL AND PROMINENT MEDIA COVERAGE. COMMENTARY AND EDITORIALS, SHARPLY CRITICAL OF ALLEGED U.S. INTERVENTION IN THE AFFAIRS OF CHILE AND OTHER COUNTRIES, ARE MOST ABUNDANT IN THE RADICAL NATIONALIST AND LEFTIST PRESS, PARTICULARLY IN INFLUENTIAL EXCELSIOR AND IN THE SOCIALIST EL DIA.

2. CURRENT MEXICAN INTEREST IN THE HISTORY OF USG ACTIONS IN CHILE FLOURISHES IN A CLIMATE OF INTENSE -- SOMETIMES NEAR-HYSTERICAL -- SUSPICION, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS USG ACTIVITIES IN MEXICO. RECENTLY PUBLICIZED ALLEGATIONS BY FORMER CIA EMPLOYEE PHILIP AGEE HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ATMOSPHERE IN LARGE MEASURE. SIMILARLY, WATERGATE-RELATED STORIES THAT THE FBI WAS DIRECTED TO LIMIT INVESTIGATIONS LEST CIA OPERATIONS IN MEXICO BE JEOPARDIZED HAVE NOT BEEN

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PAGE 02 MEXICO 07927 191503Z

FORGOTTEN HERE.

3. ANOTHER FACTOR IN THE CLOSE ATTENTION PAID TO CURRENT DISCLOSURES ON CHILE IS THE VERY CLOSE TIES THE ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION FELT TOWARD THE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT. GOM RELATIONS WITH THE JUNAT GOVERNMENT OF CHILE REMAIN COLD, AND ONLY A FEW DAYS AGO MRS. ECHEVERRIA ATTENDED THE OPENING OF A "CHILE HOUSE" ESTABLISHED BY CHILEAN EXILES AND ASSOCIATES HOSTILE TO THE GOC. ACCORDINGLY, ACCUSATIONS OF USG INTERVENTION IN CHILE HAVE SPECIAL RESONANCE HERE.

4. NOT ONLY THE USUAL YANKEE-BAITERS BUT ALSO SOME RELATIVELY MORE OBJECTIVE OBSERVERS ARE INFECTED BY THE SEMI-HYSTERICAL APPREHENSION OVER POSSIBLE USG INTERVENTION IN MEXICO. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT A PPS LEADER COMMENTED DARKLY (IN THE PRESS) ON THE COINCIDENCE OF AMBASSADOR JOVA'S PRESENCE IN GUADALAJARA WHEN THE PRESIDENT'S FATHER-IN-LAW WAS KIDNAPPED. (WE DO NOT SUGGEST THAT THE PPS IS A RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION, BUT MERELY THAT ITS LEADERS, LIKE ANYONE ELSE, STRIVE TO MAINTAIN CREDIBILITY AND APPARENTLY FEEL THERE IS SOME RECEPTIVITY FOR EVEN SUCH OUTRAGEOUS STATEMENTS AS THAT CITED.) AN EXCELSIOR COLUMNIST (HIMSELF A PPS MEMBER) ON SEPTEMBER 18 EVEN SEES A "TRAP" IN A RECENT PUBLIC COMMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOVA THAT THERE WAS NO HOSTILITY TOWARD FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN MEXICO. THE COLUMNIST SUSPECTS, HE MAKES CLEAR, A VAST CONSPIRACY AGAINST MEXICO. FINALLY, THE MEXICAN PRESS IS AGAIN QUOTING WILLIAM HIGGS OF THE (U.S.) COMMITTEE FOR AN OPEN SOCIETY WHO SEES SINISTER IMPLICATIONS IN AN ALLEGED (APPARENTLY NON-EXISTENT) PROGRAM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS TO MICROFILM "THE ENTIRE ARCHIVES OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT". HIGGS WARNS THAT THIS DATA WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CIA, AND SOME MEXICAN ALARMISTS

WORRY THAT THE DATA WILL BE COMPUTERIZED AND MANIPULATED IN SUCH A WAY THAT FOREIGNERS WILL KNOW MORE ABOUT MEXICO THAN DO MEXICANS.

5. COMMENT: THE ABSURDITY OF SOME ALLEGATIONS MENTIONED ABOVE SHOULD NOT OBSCURE THE REAL PROBLEM THEY REFLECT FOR U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONS. THE GOM, AND AT LEAST SOME ELEMENTS OF MEXICAN PUBLIC OPINION, TAKE CHARGES OF

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 07927 191503Z

POSSIBLE U.S. INTERVENTION VERY SERIOUSLY. (THE SECRETARIAT OF GOVERNMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS FOUND IT NECESSARY TO DENY THAT PERMISSION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ANYONE TO MICROFILM GOM ARCHIVES.) WE BELIEVE THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE U.S. ON THE ISSUE OF ALLEGED INTERVENTION IN CHILE WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE HEADLINES IN MEXICO AND THAT MANY MEXICANS WILL RELATE THESE MATTERS TO THE USG PRESENCE IN MEXICO. JOVA

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